



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CMAP Transportation Committee

**From:** CMAP staff

**Date:** April 2015

**Re:** Early considerations for the next long-range plan

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The Transportation Committee (TC) will be integral to the development of the next long-range plan. It is expected that in developing a new plan, the policies of GO TO 2040 will be used as a launching point to advance into more specific recommendations. Communication and collaboration throughout the plan development process will help to assure a successful outcome. In particular, discussions on key issues related to the planning approach should begin early in the process, and an initial list is provided in this memo for discussion.

- **Committee engagement process.** A high priority for staff is engagement with TC members to understand their needs and respond appropriately. A possible approach is to hold periodic forums after TC meetings on specific issues which members and others can choose to attend based on their interests and expertise. Where discussions could benefit from specialized expertise, members may be asked to identify subject matter experts at their agencies or groups they represent to attend and give feedback at these forums. Some of the transportation-related working groups would also be engaged for technical review.
- **Financial plan.** The GO TO 2040 financial plan assumes flexibility in funding. This has some attractive aspects – in particular, it enables discussion of trade-offs across programs – as well as some challenges. Members may have already reviewed how other MPOs carry out the financial planning process and CMAP staff can research and present information to help determine how to proceed in the upcoming plan. Members and staff may also provide research into cost estimates and additional or “reasonably expected” revenues for consideration in the next plan.
- **Performance targets.** MAP-21 requires MPOs to use a [performance-based approach to transportation decision-making and development of plans](#). Additional measures and targets will likely be needed in the next long-range plan. One important consideration is how to link the achievement of the targets back to the strategies and financial outlays in

the plan. Staff estimates that CMAP will need to begin developing its targets in mid-2016.

- **Project definition for regionally significant projects.** Currently, the region considers new interstate capacity and “comparable” new capacity on the transit system to be regionally significant projects, termed “major capital projects (MCPs)” in the plan. Only these projects are specifically itemized in the fiscal constraint demonstration. The MPO certification review in 2014 suggested that CMAP reconsider the definition of regionally significant project and base it on project “impact” rather than “scope.” During the GO TO 2040 update process, TC members also mentioned the potential importance of capturing arterial expansion needs and Bus Rapid Transit/Arterial Rapid Transit, among other project types. Staff will work with members to develop options on defining regionally significant projects to try to address these issues and meet other stakeholder needs
- **Project evaluation: documenting and addressing needs on the system.** Given that more observed data on transportation system performance is available than previously, evaluating needs on the system and the degree to which proposed projects address these needs is a possibility. The Regional Transportation Operations Coalition (RTOC) has seen a very early version of work that staff has done to use observed performance data to identify needs. After further technical review by RTOC and other stakeholders, the Transportation Committee would be engaged in this discussion.
- **Project evaluation: role of benefit-cost analysis.** Formal benefit-cost analysis has not been part of the capital project evaluation process to date. Staff hopes to explore with the TC and other working committees the conceptual issues associated with benefit-cost analysis as well as the pros and cons of using this technique.
- **Strategy papers.** Similar to the original GO TO 2040 process, it is anticipated that white papers will be developed to provide background on planning issues and to investigate potential plan recommendations. The TC is asked to explore potential topics, and staff will collaborate with relevant member agencies to produce discussion drafts.

It is not expected that TC will be able to have a substantial discussion on all of the above areas at the April meeting but would return to the discussion in upcoming meetings. Furthermore, CMAP’s FY2016 staff work plan is under development and the intent is to have further discussions on the next plan and CMAP’s work plan at the TC’s May meeting.

**Action requested: Discussion**